



Labor Council for Latin American Advancement

"Un Pueblo Unido: Be Powerful! Be Heard!"

Home to the Latino Labor Movement

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Acting Chairman Michael Copps
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 09-51

May 11, 2009

Dear FCC Acting Chairman and Commissioners:

The Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) is a national organization representing the interests of approximately 1.7 million Latino trade unionists throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. LCLAA works in coalition with other leading Hispanic organizations to maximize support for economic and social policies that are essential to advancing the interests of Hispanics. LCLAA also works with these organizations to promote legislation that empowers the Latino community as well as combat legislation that poses a threat to the community.

We commend the Congress and the Administration for including the creation of a national broadband strategy in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Broadband is an essential tool for today's American working families and can play a significant role in the economic empowerment of Latino working families. However, many Americans, especially Latino workers and small businesses, are still without access to high-speed Internet, while other families have yet to understand the benefits of broadband at home. The FCC must work towards achieving the objective of bringing broadband connection to every home in America. In reaching this goal, policymakers must ensure that broadband deployment and adoption can be maximized, particularly to low-income communities and communities with little access.

Jobs and investments in the IT/broadband sector have been particularly beneficial to the economy in these trying economic times. It is widely known that U.S. investments in broadband related information technology have driven a significant portion of the productivity growth of this decade. Americans working in the broadband industry also see such benefits. A study by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) reports that the green jobs involved in the building and expansion of broadband networks pay 42% higher than the average for manufacturing jobs. The broadband/IT sectors are also responsible for nearly half of all new American jobs in 2008. With the adoption of a national broadband strategy that will incentivize private sector investment, we expect these



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positive figures to continue. Promoting broadband deployment benefits American workers, as well as the entire American economy, and as Latino workers become more involved in the tech and the green jobs sector, broadband should play an even bigger role in the economic empowerment of Latino working families.

According to a study by Connected Nation, a mere 32% of low-income families with children have a home broadband connection, compared to 50% of all residents. That number is significantly lower for Latino working families with children. While broadband is technically available to many of these families, they have yet to see the benefit of such technology. The FCC national broadband strategy must place an emphasis on reducing barriers towards adoption. All Latino families deserve to have the same opportunities for education, telemedicine, and telework, and the only way to ensure this level-playing field is for a national broadband strategy to guarantee increased access and adoption.

As the voice of Latino workers and their families, LCLAA is highly supportive of the pursuit of a national broadband strategy. Broadband jobs are important to the American economy, to Latino workers as well as to all American workers. We urge the FCC to remember the key role that private providers play in our economy and in supporting good jobs for IT sector workers.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gabriela Lemus

Executive Director of *Labor Council for Latin American Advancement*

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